

National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

Tribal Elder Protection Team- Toolkit

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The Beginning

How did we meet?

Tribal agency questions?

Wilson's professional assistance needed!!!

Conference Calls = Collaboration

What came from these calls?



What is a Tribal Elder Protection Team

A Tribal Elder Protection Team (EPT) is a group of professionals, the elder, family members, and community members from diverse disciplines.

- ❖ The EPT provides assistance to the elderly person to promote coordination among service programs available to elders.
- ❖ Improve lines of communication to efficiently address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- ❖ Various professional disciplines are represented
- ❖ Membership is limited and is not open to all service providers, or members of the public.

Tribal Elder
Protection Team



Why create a EPT?

- ❖ To reduce stereotypes around elder abuse
- ❖ To improve standardized protocols to increase resources available to elders
- ❖ To improve appropriate responses to elder abuse
- ❖ To improve communication and coordination among service agencies, thereby saving valuable time locating advocates and addressing safety concerns for the elder
- ❖ To improve elder abuse training for professionals
- ❖ To reduce underreporting of elder abuse

Why are Elder Protection Programs Different?

Elder Protection programs vary across Indian Country in terms of:

- ❖ Available infrastructure including agencies and personnel responding to incidents
- ❖ Jurisdictional considerations
- ❖ Availability of traditional justice systems
- ❖ Tribal and/or State civil or criminal courts

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs- **MDT Protocol Example**¹

- 1) Establish and define MDT member roles and responsibilities
- 2) How do you define an elder or vulnerable adult?
- 3) A report of suspected elder abuse is made, now what happens?
- 4) Who conducts the investigation of elder abuse in your tribal community?
- 5) What is the time frame for responding to a report of elder abuse?
- 6) Why should a MDT/EPT have members rotate being "on-call"?
- 7) Who is a member of the MDT/EPT, and why?
- 8) How are MDT members assigned to an elder?
- 9) What is included on a client case summary sheet?
- 10) What happens in the MDT meeting?
- 11) What happens if the elder abuse case goes to tribal court?
- 12) When do you know the case is resolved?



Who is a EPT Member?

One of the most successful models for addressing elder abuse in Indian Country is utilized by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) in Oregon. The CTWS-MDT representatives have served their tribal community since 1999 through a multidisciplinary team approach.

The CTWS- MDT members include representatives from:

- The Senior Wellness Center,
- Tribal Police,
- Tribal Prosecutor's Office,
- BIA/Tribal Social Services,
- Tribal Housing Authority,
- Indian Health Service (IHS),
- Community Health Representatives (CHR),
- Victims of Crimes Office,
- Assisted Living, and
- the Oregon Adult Protective Services.



Who is the EPT Coordinator?

- Ensure the EPT is managed appropriately
- To increase accountability of team members, it is recommended to designate an EPT Coordinator or Director.
- This individual may have dual roles on the EPT as the coordinator, and as a representative for a tribal agency (e.g. Title VI Director).

This team member will facilitate a group of professional community members in the unification of collaborative efforts to assist elders who may be experiencing elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Multidisciplinary Team Approach on Elder Abuse

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
Warm Springs, Oregon

Wilson Wewa – Senior Wellness Program Coordinator

<https://www.nieji.org/pdf/multidisciplinary-team-approach-elder-abuse-presentation-121014.pdf>

MISSION STATEMENT

“To work as a team to acknowledge, respond and stop elder abuse; and, to improve respect for elders through education, prevention, advocacy and case review; and, to hold tribal members responsible for their actions.”

The Warm Springs Indian Reservation is located within the state of Oregon

- 164, 000 acre land base
- 98% of reservation is tribally owned
- 2 % is allotted land



The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs consists of 3 Tribes

- Warm Springs
- Wasco
- Northern Paiute



The Warm Springs Senior Citizen program became a formal program in the 1970's.

- The program was initially a congregate lunch site under Title VI, Part A.
- Later, the Caregiver program Title VI, Part C was included.

In my community there was virtually no indication of elder abuse prior to 1980.

- So, there were no laws to address it.
- Abusive behaviors were dealt with by the family.
- Tribal members respected one another.

In 1999, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs implemented what we call the Multi-disciplinary Team on Elder Abuse (MDT)

MDT Identified Needs

- Lack of training
- Lack of Trust
- Stereotypes
- Lack of communication and coordination among agencies
- No resources
- Denial of elder abuse
- No standardized protocol/response

There was a need to include various types of programmatic, policy and advocacy activities.

- Service delivery level: improving services
- Systems level: create policies that build community wide networks, change policy, rules and regulations.

Formation of Multidisciplinary Team

- Define responsibilities and function
- Criteria of membership and affiliation
- Purpose of the MDT meeting
- Definition of roles & responsibilities of members
- Community awareness

Purpose of the MDT meeting

- Case review
- Prevention
- Intervention – senior program & others
- Intervention – law enforcement or court

Definition of roles & responsibilities of members

- What will they do – response protocol & mandatory reporting
- Training needs
- Jurisdictional issues
- Signed protocols

Membership & Affiliation

- Departments select representative
- Participants agree to protocols
- All participants sign confidentiality agreement
- Each representative shares follow-up

CASE REVIEW

- Each department reports potential abuse issues to team
- Discussion of issues
- Lead department responsibility
- Need to file legal action or resolve in-house

Confidentiality Agreement

1. Information shared by chairperson of confidential nature of meeting
2. Cannot discuss with any non-member of MDT
3. Legal ramifications for breach of agreement
4. Removal from team or employment termination
5. Removal from discussion; due to relationship to elder.

The Warm Springs Multi-disciplinary Team

- Senior Wellness Center
- Tribal Police
- BIA/Tribal social services
- Housing
- Indian Health Service

- Community Health Representatives
- Victims of Crime office
- Assisted Living
- Oregon Adult Protection Services

Successes

- In closing, the MDT model has been successfully used to avert further abuse
- Educated tribal membership
- Lessened expense of litigation
- Connected elders with needed services
- Made participating programs aware of potential needs.

How to Develop a Tribal EPT?

Getting Started

1. Build a team of professionals.
2. Identify the tribal community's concerns for elders through a Community Needs Assessment
3. Complete a Statement of Needs summary report
4. Develop organizational rules for the EPT
5. Develop a tribal elder protection code
6. Learn about State and Tribal Laws in your area
7. Program considerations include:
 - Identify technical experience available to launch the EPT (e.g., computer resources)
 - Determine if there are sufficient economic resources available
 - Determine the legal requirements or restrictions for the EPT
 - Develop a business plan and budget addressing how the EPT will operate
8. Develop a sustainability plan

EPT Challenges

- ❖ Attendance issues (not having a large variety of agencies represented),
- ❖ A lack of commitment from representatives to attend meetings regularly,
- ❖ A lack of cases presented
- ❖ A lack of knowledge of other agencies' policies and mandates, that often leads to a negative perception that some agencies are non-cooperative
- ❖ Frustration among agencies in dealing with seemingly unsolvable cases
- ❖ Maintenance of confidentiality
- ❖ Costs, travel time to meeting location
- ❖ Mandated Reporter policies

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For More Information

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Thank You!

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